

HIRING TREE SERVICES

HOW TO HIRE TREE SERVICES FOR TREE TRIMMING, TREE REMOVAL

By [David Beaulieu](#), About.com Guide

When would consumers be advised to hire tree services? Reflect upon the following image:

A tree limb crashes through a window, sprinkling glass all over the living room carpet! That is surely an occurrence to avoid, right? But what if you need to have tree [limbing](#)¹ work done in order to let more sun into a garden area? If you undertake your tree-limbing project **yourself**, you risk precisely that occurrence, when the tree in question looms over your house like the fabled sword of Damocles. Clearly, tree limbing is not a project to rush into. Even the most ardent do-it-yourselfer will probably want to defer to the expertise of tree services on this one. The problem is: How do you locate tree services? And once you've located them, how do you separate the wheat from the chaff for a difficult tree limbing job?

Caveats When Hiring Tree Services

Certainly, an all-purpose handyman driving around a neighborhood in a pickup truck with a chainsaw and hollering out sales pitches may not be suitable for work demanding such a high level of responsibility.

Also be wary of hiring tree services requesting payment in advance or who wish to begin work without having drawn up a free estimate of the cost. In fact, consumers should demand not only an estimate but also a written [contract](#)², laying out precisely what the tree limbing job entails and for how much. If limbing work needs to be performed on a tree whose appearance is important to you, always insist that tree services climb the tree using ropes or ascend with an aerial lift (see photo at right) rather than using climbing spikes. Spikes cause damage to the [cambium](#)³ of a tree.

For dangerous work such as this, tree services' demonstrated possession of adequate insurance may well be the consumer's primary consideration. Request to see certificates of liability and workman's compensation insurance, and check that they are current. Phone the insurance company to verify current policy information.

Also ascertain how prepared tree services are to take appropriate action in the event that a mishap occurs. For instance, tree services removing limbs situated directly over telephone wires leading into your house should have experience in splicing together damaged wires. To minimize the likelihood of such damage in the first place, skilled tree services carefully control the fall of limbs using ropes.

While most large tree companies have someone who can repair telephone or cable wires. if they should get out...no company will re-splice your electrical service cable. This is a direct feed from the utility company. and they need to come and shut down the cable at the transformer. This may entail taking out the power from your neighbors as well. Also. electrical service cables usually have wire rope wound around the cables. so if they do break. often there is damage at the masthead (where the cable attaches to the house). so an electrician needs to repair this as well.

-- Peter Rennie. Arborist

Decide in advance exactly how much you want the tree service that you hire to do. Will they just be limbing the tree? Or will they be removing the whole tree? If the latter, will they be grinding the stump, or will you be [removing the tree stump](#)⁴ yourself?

Hiring Tree Services: Word of Mouth and References

Finally, it never hurts to do some asking around on your own. Take advantage of word of mouth by striking up conversations on the subject with neighbors. If someone else in the neighborhood once had a tree limb arrive unexpectedly on the living room carpet, accompanied by a shower of glass, due to the incompetence of a tree service, chances are you'll hear about it. Conversely, tree services worth hiring will benefit from word of mouth and will be glad to provide a list of phone numbers of local clients satisfied with a job well done. As when dealing with any professional who will be working around your home, don't be afraid to ask for references from tree services.

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